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Monday, February 25, 1952

My cold at flood proportions. To the French Embassy this morning to try to settle security controls over German production of armaments. We bogged down on civil aviation, and the U.S. delegation returned to the Embassy to attempt to straighten it out.

I left there at 1.15 for the hotel, to pay the bill and start for the plane.

Sir Patrick and Lady Ramsay had come for a quick lunch with us. I am so enthusiastic about them - he a diverting character, and she - perhaps aged 65 - still a great beauty. Lunch was on the-fly, for we had to make for the airport. I made a short farewell to Portugal on the radio, and we boarded Shape's "Sunflower", a [redacted] comfortable C-54 that we had once gone in to Rome. Doug MacArthur had been kind enough to arrange this for us. He is always so thoughtful [redacted]

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Had an interesting conversation with Doug and dear Ridge Knight over strategy for Southeast Asia -- to remain, to sustain, to withdraw and so forth.

Passed over snow-covered Spanish mountains, Cognac (which Jean Monnet stared at attentively), and coasted into Orly after 5-1/2 hours in the air, absolutely on the dot.

Yesterday, when I went to see Bidault (who had asked [redacted] I visit him, and both Faure and Bourgès-Maunoury -- his Deputy -- were [redacted] insistent I should), I was dismayed to discover what had been the gravity of his illness. He was afflicted, from almost the moment he arrived in Portugal where he was staying in the country with M. Neuvy, a friend of Robert Gérard, with an intestinal condition which had brought on dangerous hemorrhages. I am [redacted] fond of him personally, as I am of Suzie. He expressed himself as heartily in favor of what President Faure had decided to do about France's ~~NATO commitment~~, but said it wasn't enough and [redacted] he would not remain as Defense Minister. He is entirely impractical about financial affairs, and

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says it is up to the Finance Minister to provide him sufficient funds to carry on the minimum of troop strength and industrial military production, and that 1400 billion francs is insufficient to the purpose. I talked to him about the importance of his not resigning now, and he said he would not do so. He stated he would loyally support Faure with MRP votes, but he did not think the present Government would last a week. With the MRP votes he said he had sustained various Governments in power, but could do so no longer, since in spite of the findings of the Wise Men, and the recent additions, the French military budget was not enough. When I requested his view as to how supplementary resources might be found, he observed this was not his business, but he would favor cutting further the ordinary civil expenses of Government (already lower than they were in 1939 on a gold basis) in order to accomplish this end.

This whole situation is critical. France is of all countries in NATO making, except for the United

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States, the largest effort in defense on a comparative basis. But the war in Indochina is bleeding her white, and curtailing her ability to furnish adequate trained and equipped forces in Europe. Meanwhile, my personal view is that U.S. Government policy is too unsympathetic and unrealistic about France's plight, and too pro-German, especially in Pentagon circles. There is a decided disposition to take no action that might be construed as being "Nasty to the Germans", but when there is a question of French susceptibilities to try to extract every concession from the French that might be pleasing to the Germans, who have to date traded our pants off without producing any assistance to defense except a contribution to occupation costs. I cannot help thinking how efficiently, practically, and brutally the Germans would have handled this affair, had they been victorious in the last war and were now faced with a Sov [redacted] threat.

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